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RURAL CHILDREN AND HOME DEMONSTRATION WORK 1939 ☆

Department of Agriculture

A radio talk by Mrs. Lydia Ann Lynde, Extension Service, broadcast Wednesday, May 3, 1939, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour.

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The past week has been important in the lives of our children. We have just had another May Day -- Child Health Day and I know that many of you took part in special programs, that most of you paused to take stock of the children about you -- yours and your neighbor's.

You may have been more earnest in your consideration since only a few days before President Roosevelt had called to the White House some 500 men and women from all parts of the country to start another year of study of the status of "Children in a Democracy." We are to study our achievements and our failures and our dilemmas, to seek solutions to the problems that confront us in helping our boys and girls grow up into well balanced, well developed citizens, capable of shouldering the responsibilities of a great democracy. This is a study which concerns us all and in which we all have a part.

It is inspiring to me to know that there are 47,000 home demonstration groups in our states and territories already studying the needs of children in rural life and seeking ways to meet them. More than a million, -- yes - million people, farm women and men, took part in these groups. You will notice I included men in that number. Their children are their greatest concerns. Their children are their greatest concerns. They know that their homes and their family life are the most important factors in the development and well being of their children. So as in Oregon, these men are joining with the women in studying the improvement of their homes and of their family life.

For twenty-five years the Cooperative Extension Service has been helping these farm people to study the most recent information in all the fields of homemaking as well as agriculture and to find ways of putting this knowledge into use in their own homes.

As a result of this home demonstration work these farm people are accomplishing more for their children -- better nutrition, better sanitation, more wholesome and understanding training. These parents are recognizing the individuality of each child and are adjusting their homes and living plans to meet his particular needs. They are seeking ways of helping each child grow up into a sane, reasonable person who enjoys living and working with others.

And more, these farm men and women have been generous with their time and energy. They share with their neighbors information and the benefits of

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their experiences. At random I have turned through 32 county home demonstration agents' reports. These 32 reports came from only 21 states. In them I found many stories of this sharing of information and experience.

Especially let me tell you about some of the child health clinics which have been sponsored, organized and managed by home demonstration groups. From these few county reports I found that the extension groups had conducted 622 child health clinics serving more than 20,000 rural children. Twenty thousand children benefitted by this good neighborliness. These figures came from just a few counties in each of less than half of the states. Can you imagine the bigness of the entire picture that would be shown if we examined the 2,000 reports of all the home demonstration agents?

In setting up these clinics the Extension Service groups mobilized available nurses, doctors and dentists. They located quarters and necessary equipment. They obtained serums for the much needed protective immunizations. One story I remember told of fixing up a temporary hospital for corrective work because the nearest doctor was 135 miles away. In ways like this home demonstration groups not only study their problems, but they take the leadership in finding ways to solve them.

I have mentioned only one of their many endeavors. I commend the home demonstration groups in every state for what they have accomplished. But there is still much to be done. Let us all join our neighbors in this study of the needs of all of our children. Let us take stock of our facilities and our talents and then pool our efforts for the best for all children. There is so much we ourselves can do for our children in our democracy.

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